THE BEGINNINGS OF THE Liberal Catholic Church FEBRUARY 13, 1916

AS WRITTEN FOR UBIQUE
by
BISHOP JAMES INGALL WEDGWOOD
together with some additional notes
by the Editor

ISSUED ON THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE CHURCH

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THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

- By Bishop James Ingall Wedgwood -

Editorial Foreword:

On the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of our Church it seems appropriate to reprint an account of its beginnings written for *Ubique* by our first Presiding Bishop in 1937. In editing for this reprint numbers (1), (2), etc. have been inserted in the text and refer to editorial notes at the end of Bishop Wedgwood's article, mostly concerning the passing on of persons then living, with other pertinent matter.

The Editor has appended some further items of historical interest, including a list of the present Bishops of the Church, notes on its worldwide extension and pictures of some of its leaders.

+ William H. Pitkin.

Beginnings of the L.C.C.

The Editor has asked me to put pen to paper and write some account of the beginnings of The Liberal Catholic Church. The story has not been told in its entirety before, so I gladly do as he asks. I shall have to request the indulgence of readers if a certain amount of *autobiography*, or talk about oneself, enters into the narrative. The train of events is mixed up with my early life. I shall try to keep that autobiography as short as possible.

From quite an early age I was interested in the church organ. I remember being taken as a boy of about seven into an old church at Folkestone and bursting into tears when I heard the organ being played. Later at school I was given lessons in organ playing, and I began to study the complicated mechanism inside the organ and the treatment of its many kinds of pipes. Later I wrote some books on the subject, of which a *Dictionary of Organ Stops* has run into seven editions. Another hobby was chemistry. On leaving school I was sent, on the advice of Sir Henry Roscoe, a famous chemist of the time, to University College, Nottingham, in England, to study analytical chemistry with a view to taking it up as one's profession.

My interest in church music led me to a *high* Anglican Church in that town. I got deeply interested in the Catholic presentation of Christian doctrine and worship, became an altar server and started reading books on theology. The choirmaster of that church, St.Alban's, Nottingham, Dr. Beckett Gibbs, an authority on the Solesmes system of plainchant, is now (1936) in charge of the music at St.Ignatius' Episcopal Church in New York. So soon as my studies in Nottingham were finished I was sent to York Minster, one of the largest and most beautiful of the historic English cathedrals, as an articled pupil of the organist there, Dr.T.Tertius Noble, now (1936) of St.Thomas' Episcopal Church, New York. I spent four years with him. During that time I was up in the organ loft twice in the day and helped in the training of some of the junior boys in the choir. I acted as server in two high Anglican churches in succession and as choirmaster in one of them, in which the Solesmes system of plainchant was and is still used.

I finally decided to read for Holy Orders in the Church of England. But there is an old proverb: "Man proposes, God disposes". (People who think that the Devil is behind theosophy are at liberty to impute the responsibility to him!) Mrs. Besant came along to York to lecture there. I had heard her once before, at Nottingham. I said to the Vicar in whose church I was working and in whose house I was living: "I'm going to hear that woman again, but she won't get me this time." He came with me to the lecture. Three days later I joined the Theosophical Society and was summarily banished from the church. The Vicar could not have such a heretic as a church official! We are the best of friends these days, and I told him recently that he had acted in my best interest and that I now knew that I could never have been happy in the Anglican Church.

From that time forward I renounced all thought of church work and of a church career, and having just enough income on which to live decided to devote myself to work in and for the Theosophical Society. From 1911-1913 I acted as General Secretary of the Society in England and Wales, relinquishing that office to become Grand Secretary of the British Jurisdiction of the Co-Masonic Order. So much for preliminary history.

In 1913 a letter appeared in one of the London daily newspapers dealing with the habits of birds. The letter caught my eye especially because it was signed by Archbishop A.H.Mathew, of whose existence as an Old Catholic bishop in England I knew vaguely. Something impelled me to write to him to ask for particulars of the Church of which he was head. He sent a very friendly answer. The idea of taking Orders re-entered my head. I told him something of the story of my life, of my interest in church work and of the studies I had made.

During the interchange of letters which followed I was honest with him about my relation with the Theosophical Society, and as some indication of one's belief sent him a copy of Mrs.Besant's little book, *Theosophy*, published in the *Jack* series of *The People's Books*. He asked me to go and see him, and at once accepted me. I was re-baptized and reconfirmed by him *sub conditione*, given the Minor Orders, those of Subdeacon and Deacon, and finally ordained by him as priest on July 22, 1913. These ceremonies all took place in an oratory which I equipped in my rooms at 1Upper Woburn Place, London, opposite the Headquarters of the T.S. where I worked as General Secretary.I mention details such as these because in attacks of a most unscrupulous kind which were later to follow it was alleged that I had concealed the fact of my being a Theosophist from him.

The following two years saw the ordination to the priesthood by Abp. Mathew of other members of the Theosophical Society. Their names are: Bernard Edward Rupert Gauntlett (July 1, 1914), Reginald Elphinstone Astley Loftus Farrer (August 1,1914) and Robert King (August 1, 1914). Rupert Gauntlett belonged to a family who owned a large paper manufactory and worked in that firm. Reginald Farrer had independent means. Robert King was and is well known as a theosophical lecturer and authority on psychic faculties. (1) Following upon these names should be mentioned that of Frederick James (April 4,1915); he had been a member of the T.S. until the previous year. The ceremonies took place for the most part in the oratory in my house. (The dates following the names are those of ordination to the priesthood.)

At the same time as Robert King and Reginald Farrer an ex-priest of the Anglican Church, not a Theosophist, Frederick Samuel Willoughby, M.A. (Cantab.), was passed through the ceremonies from Confirmation to the Priesthood, all being administered, of course, *sub conditione*. He and Reginald Farrer were baptized *sub conditione* on the same day, July 18, 1914, in my oratory and in succession to one another, the one by Abp. Mathew, the other by myself.

Bishop King and I were discussing these events recently - we have remained close friends for nearly 30 years - and he reminded me that it was on the first anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood that I took him to Bromley in Kent to see the Archbishop, and that much of the conversation on that occasion had turned round the habits of birds, about which the old Archbishop had a wide range of information.

Another member of the Theosophical Society was also ordained at this period of the Church's history, that is, during the period of Abp. Mathew's headship, namely Theodore Bell, of Harrogate. Quakers were numerous round about Harrogate and York, and he came of a Quaker family. The parents, William and Elizabeth Bell, were leading Theosophists in Harrogate and were proprietors of the chief drapery establishment in that town. Theodore Bell was baptized by Reginald Farrer, confirmed by Bishop Willoughby, and received the several ordinations up to the priesthood (November 13,1914)

at the hands of Bishop Willoughby. He has for some years worked in the United States as a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church and has achieved some renown in that field of work. His brother, Robert William Bell, is also well known as a priest of our Church, serving at Tekels Park, Camberley. (2)

In the autumn of 1914 I went to Adyar, India to the Headquarters of the T.S. on the invitation of Mrs. Besant, and in the following year visited Australia. I was at the time Grand Secretary of the Order of Universal Co-Masonry for the British Jurisdiction, and I went there largely in connection with that work. It was in that year, 1915, that I had the privilege of initiating C.W. Leadbeater into Freemasonry. I talked with him about my ordination and he came to various celebrations of the Eucharist by myself. He was greatly impressed by the power for good which such ordination bestowed and with the splendid scope that the celebration offered for spreading spiritual blessing abroad on the world.

In the meantime Abp. Mathew had consecrated F.S.Willoughby as Bishop. In September 1914 he had addressed a letter to his clergy saying that in view of his advancing years it seemed to him desirable that "immediate steps should be taken to preserve the valid episcopal succession in our portion of the Church from risk of loss". The election then held resulted in the consecration of the Rev.F.S.Willoughby by Abp.Mathew on October 28,1914. My name came second in the voting and it was understood that I was to be consecrated on my return, so that there should be bishops to the canonical number of three. It is the rule of the Church that three bishops shall officiate at an episcopal consecration. Consecration by a single bishop is valid; the rule requiring three is partly aimed against clandestine consecrations and to ensure that all shall be done *coram populo*. Also it is well that in a small independent movement the chain of episcopal succession shall not hang on one or even on two links.

The Old Catholic Church

At this stage of our narrative it will be fitting and most convenient to say something about the movement which Abp. Mathew represented. There is no need to write in any detail about the origin and history of the Old Catholic Church. An outline of that is given in our *Statement of Principles*, and the story can be read in various books which treat of church history. At the beginning of the 18th century a number of Dutch clergy centering round the Chapter of Utrecht found themselves in resistance to what they regarded as unlawful interference on the part of Rome. It is claimed on their side that they were fighting against Jesuit intrigue. They were able to secure the episcopal succession from a bishop in Roman Orders, and thenceforward maintained themselves in a state of independence from Rome. In Holland they came to be known as *The Old Roman Church*. They retained the Latin Rite, since their differences were at first ones of discipline and not of doctrine. The Pope was prayed for as Patriarch of the West until 1910.

The movement known as *Old Catholic* is of later and different origin. It dates from the time of the formulation by the Roman Catholic Church of the doctrine of *Papal Infallibility*, a doctrine promulgated by the Vatican Council of 1870. A number of prominent scholars on the Continent of Europe went into revolt at what they regarded as a serious innovation in doctrine. The Dutch *Old Roman Church* came to their aid and consecrated Prof. Reinkens of Bonn as their bishop in Germany. He in his turn consecrated a certain Dr. Herzog as bishop of the Swiss *Christian Catholic Church* (as they called and call themselves) in 1876. And the movement eventually spread to some other countries. There is, for instance, in U.S.A. a *Polish National Catholic Church* in union with Utrecht, whose first bishop, Antonius Stanislaus Kozlowski, was consecrated in 1897 by the above-named Bishop Herzog of Switzerland. He was succeeded by Bishop Francis Hodur, consecrated at Utrecht in 1907. There are other so-called *Old Catholic* or *Old Roman Catholic* Churches which are not in union with Utrecht.

I ought now to say a few words about Abp.Mathew's relations with Utrecht. On taking up work in the English movement we discovered to our surprise that the number of active adherents in that country could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Archbishop Mathew had quarrelled successively with the Dutch Church and the Anglican Church, and had lost one after another of his Auxiliary Bishops and clergy. Of this we shall speak later. It was owing to our efforts that an Oratory was opened in London in Red Lion Square and a permanent congregation gradually gathered together.

It does not fall within the range or purview of this article to discuss at any length the difficulties with Utrecht or the misunderstanding under which Dr. Mathew had been consecrated. They are dealt with in a pamphlet by myself issued in 1920 in the form of an *Open Letter* to the Archbishop of Canterbury and bearing the title, *The Lambeth Conference and the Validity of Archbishop Mathew's Orders*. It had been thought that some Roman Catholic congregations in Great Britain were proposing to join the Old Catholics and on these grounds the consecration took place. No such exodus from the Roman Church did follow.

On the discovery of the facts Bishop Mathew offered to retire into private life, but the Old Catholic bishops in a letter to the English journal, *The Guardian*, dated June 3, 1908, exonerated him from all complicity in the proceedings, saying that their "confidence in Bishop Mathew remains unshaken after carefully perusing a large number of documents bearing on this matter", and they commended his ministrations to the blessing of Almighty God and to the support of the English Church and people.

In 1910 Bishop Mathew broke off relations with the Old Catholics. He gave as his reason the fact that the Old Catholic Bishops had begun to tamper with the Catholic faith. As we have already seen, the Dutch Church had been most conservative in

ARCHBISHOP ARNOLD HARRIS MATHEW
of the
OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GREAT BRITAIN

regard to changes. It was otherwise in regard to other branches of the movement. They had tampered with Catholic teaching and practice in order to find favour with and to diminish their differences with Lutheranism and Calvinism. There is to this day a good deal of difference between the Dutch Liturgy on the one hand, and the German and Swiss Liturgies on the other hand. Incense is commonly used in Holland; it is much less used in Switzerland and has almost disappeared from the German churches. And the general outlook of the Dutch Church has been

affected in no small measure by the more Protestant tendencies of these other Churches. Various changes were made in the Dutch vernacular Liturgy of 1910. I mention these points to show that Abp. Mathew, as a man of thoroughly orthodox outlook, did not act as he did without some justification behind him.

Our Breach with Abp. Mathew

The real trouble with Abp.Mathew was his instability of character. He was outwardly charming and the most courteous of men, and it was difficult for one who knew him to think of him as being consciously or intentionally dishonest. But he was constantly changing his outlook on things. His mind behaved like a weathercock, blown about by the exigencies of the moment and the emotional reaction awakened by them. One of the many priests who had left him once said to me that he fixed six months as the average time that a man was likely to remain with him. Our turn came along in due course.

I was on my way back to England from Australia when I received word of two crises. One was concerned with the sudden dismissal of Bishop Willoughby from the movement in consequence of an attack made on him by a certain weekly journal noted for public arraignments of this kind. Abp. Mathew summoned him at a few hours' notice to defend himself. Bishop Willoughby declined to appear, claiming that prior to his entry into the movement he had discussed with the Archbishop quite freely the circumstances which had led him to resign his living in the Anglican Church. A farcical sentence of degradation was pronounced. The other sudden movement was that we all had been required to abjure our theosophical tenets. A priest who had been ordained by him who was not active in the movement and whom none of us had ever met had been impressing upon the Archbishop the iniquity of our beliefs. (3)

I arrived home to learn that Robert King and Rupert Gauntlett had been consecrated bishops by Bishop Willoughby. The latter was on the verge of making his submission to the Roman Church. He himself was not concerned one way or another with the doctrinal dispute. The remainder of the non-Theosophical clergy in Great Britain (with the solitary exception of the priest just mentioned) stood by us. Bishop Willoughby said that he owed his consecration to the suffrages of the clergy concerned and he regarded it as an honourable obligation to hand back to the movement the episcopate to guard and perpetuate which he had been consecrated. The two were to hold the succession in trust for me. Bishop Willoughby was still free when I got back to England. I waited four and a half months before accepting his offer of consecration. I wanted, if possible, to avoid later difficulties by obtaining the episcopate from another source. Four of those who had been consecrated by Abp. Mathew were approached by me, also a certain Bishop Vernon Herford, deriving his episcopal Orders from another line of succession altogether and who was and is concerned with the giving of Sacred Orders to Nonconformist ministers;(4) but, as had been anticipated, without success. The main reason for my reluctance to accept consecration at the hands of Bishop Willoughby was removed when he showed me his correspondence with the Archbishop which bore witness that he had been open and above-board with him. These letters are now in the files of our Church.

In the meantime the issue with Abp.Mathew had widened, and the clergy active in the movement decided to dissociate themselves from a leadership which they had come to see to be lacking in any sense of responsibility. Abp.Mathew then tendered his "unconditional submission" to the Roman Church. The announcement appeared in *The Times* during the last days of 1915. In a letter to a widely circulated Roman Catholic journal he expressed himself as being "absolutely and irrevocably" convinced of the necessity of actual union with the Roman See and as accepting "without hesitation or doubt" the Infallibility of the Pope (*Universe*, December 31,1915).He wrote me at this time that he "terminated" the movement which he had begun. To one not acquainted with his capacity for changing his mind it would seem in-

+ THE BEGINNING OF THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH +
CONSECRATION OF JAMES INGALL WEDGWOOD AS FIRST PRESIDING BISHOP
LONDON, ENGLAND, FEBRUARY 13, 1916

Seated, left to right: Rt.Rev. Robert King, Rt.Rev. James Ingall Wedgwood, Rt.Rev. Frederick Samuel Willoughby, Rt.Rev. Rupert Gauntlett, Dean Seaton. Standing: José B. Acuña (later Bishop), Reginald Farrer, three unidentified Servers, Theodore Bell, unidentified Priest.

credible that after so solemn and public a pronouncement he refused Rome's conditions and went through the *jeu de théatre* of resuming the headship of the movement at the invitation of the priest to whom we have referred. The later movement never made any headway in this country. Abp. Mathew died in 1919.

The Re-Organization of the Church

I was myself consecrated bishop on February 13, 1916 by Bishop Willoughby, assisted by Bishops King and Gauntlett. Our Oratory was much too small for the occasion and we made use of the Co-Masonic Temple in London. There was present a large congregation, a number of whom added their names as witnesses to the *Instrument of Consecration* signed by the bishops. (5) In the photographs taken after the ceremony Dr.Seaton, the Dean of Abp. Mathew's Chapter, is to be seen in the front row with the bishops.

Our situation was not an easy one. We had not entered the movement with any idea of starting another Church. Nothing was further from my mind. It had been a disappointment to me that I could not enter the Anglican ministry, and when the opportunity presented itself of assuming "the sweet but heavy burden of the priesthood" under these conditions of greater freedom I gladly and happily embraced it. Had there been any thought of founding an independent church one would have taken information as to Abp.Mathew's relationship with the other Old Catholic Churches and would certainly have decided to seek opportunity elsewhere. But things were not to be so. We found ourselves in relation with a devout and earnest congregation who had

learned to value greatly the spiritual privileges which the movement afforded them. Experience had shown us that inevitably we should come to grief with orthodox leadership. There was no option but to go ahead, no matter how formidable and distasteful some of the outer consequences of that course were likely to prove. The decision to carry on was therefore taken.

A few months later I was once more on my way to Sydney to take counsel with C. W. Leadbeater. The worldwide journeying was decidedly expensive, but I realized some capital in order to make it possible. Bishop King was left in charge of the work in England and admitted some good workers to the priesthood. Mr.Leadbeater saw great possibility for usefulness in the movement and placed his services unreservedly at our disposal. He was consecrated bishop on July 15,1916, having previously received conditional baptism and confirmation and the earlier Orders, again conditionally, at my hands. (6)

There now began one of the happiest and most interesting phases of my life. The many and sundry rites of the Church were carefully studied and through these researches were laid the foundations of our existing *Liturgy* and of the valuable and interesting book later published by our great colleague, *The Science of the Sacraments*. My own studies in theology now proved useful. I was able to formulate question after question, and the principles governing the working of the holy sacraments and the offices of worship of the Church were gradually elucidated. (7)

I may mention one interesting investigation as a case in point. It turned round the question of what is called *intention*. The main reason why the Roman Catholic Church regards Anglican Orders as null and void is that the Reformers, according to this judgement, had no intention to ordain sacrificing priests in the Catholic sense. There lived in England in the days of my youth an ultra-Protestant Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, a certain Dr.Ryle, who carefully told his candidates before their ordination that he was not going to ordain them as sacrificing priests but purely as ministers of the Gospel. The enquiry now made showed quite clearly that the intention to do what the Church intends to be done suffices and that idiosyncrasies of personal belief do not seriously intervene in the situation. It is the good of the many which is taken into consideration, not the misplaced belief of an individual. In other words, *it is not Bishop Ryle who ordains but the Lord Christ.*

We agreed that in the work of the revision of the Liturgy there should be no question of departing from the general outline of Christian thought and worship. Ours was a Christian church and we intended to keep it such. And we followed the general plan of the Roman Liturgy which had been in use in our Church and which we found to be the most suitable as a basis for work. I had myself been ordained and consecrated according to the Roman rite. The book used was entitled *The Old Catholic Missal and Ritual*. It had been published in 1909 by Bishop Mathew and bore the *imprimatur* of Gerardus Gul, the Archbishop of Utrecht. It incorporated, of course, the trifling changes which distinguished Old Catholicism from Roman Catholicism. We had used this book in our general services, though in accordance with Abp. Mathew's wishes I said my private daily Mass in Latin. The forms given in this book were used for the ordination and consecration of Bishop Leadbeater - they are those found in the *Pontificale Romanum*.

We set to work to eliminate the many features which from our point of view disfigure and weaken the older liturgies. References to fear of God, to His wrath and to everlasting damnation were taken out, also the constant insistence on the sinfulness and worthlessnes of man and the frequent appeals for mercy. The services were made as clear and free from repetition in their structural sequence as possible. And every opportunity was given to the congregation to join in the worship with all the resources of mind and will and emotion and self-dedication they were able to command. The sen-

timents put into the mouth of the worshipper are such as those who are filled with the spirit of devotion and service can honestly and sincerely utter. There is no need to speak further of this side of our work, for it is outlined and discussed in the Preface to our *Liturgy* and has been written about elsewhere.

One other change of method remains to be mentioned. The historical liturgies follow the custom of the time in identifying man with his physical body and activities. They speak of "my soul" and "my spirit". This outlook works to restrict man in the play of his faculties. It leads him to pray and ask for the gift of various virtues as though they were not inherent in him. Our method of treating man as a spiritual intelligence *using* a physical body leads to greater effectiveness and to far greater freedom and readiness and power of self-expression. It stresses the idea of co-operation with the Divine Father rather than that of supplication, and being outward-turned in the service of God and His world soon enables a man to realize something of the boundless resources of his own being. They are his by right and not simply by grace.

This work at the *Liturgy* took much time and effort. Early in 1918 a small volume was published in London. It contained *The Liturgy of the Mass*, together with a *Form for the Administration of Holy Communion out of Mass*, *Form for the Communion of the Sick*, the *Order of Vespers* and of *Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament*. The book was headed with the name, *The Old Catholic Church* and was "Prepared for the use of English-speaking Congregations of Old Catholics". The complete edition of the *Liturgy* was published in the following year and the note authorizing its use and signed by myself is dated *The Feast of St.Alban, 1919*. We had by then changed the name of our Church to *Liberal Catholic*, and for the word *Mass* had substituted *Holy Eucharist*. Certain small alterations were made in the wording of the earlier book. There was, for instance, a phrase at the beginning of the Canon of the Mass: "We desire to offer this Holy Sacrifice in praise to Thee and that it may avail to lift the heavy burden of the sin and sorrow of the world". This was now left out. A later edition with some additions incorporated was issued in 1924. (8)

I was myself responsible for the wording of most of the forms of service. Bishop Leadbeater and I collaborated in the writing of the Collects, though he was mainly responsible for them. Bishop Leadbeater selected the verses for the psalms and canticles, and the passages serving for epistles and gospels. Mr. E. Armine Wodehouse originally wrote the lovely hymn at the end of *Benediction*, "Closed is the Solemn Hour", for a ceremonial movement named *The Temple of the Rosy Cross*, of which Mrs.Besant, Mrs.Hotchener (then Russak) and I were the principals. He wrote also the Litanies which figure in the Benediction rite and in the Forms of Ordination. These were to have been based on those to be found in *Hymns, Ancient and Modern*. Readers who care to look up numbers 464, 470 and 472 in that book will see that only a few sentences were actually taken from that source. These Litanies are a very beautiful and happy addition to our book of worship.

I have so far discussed changes in the *Liturgy* and mode of worship. One other matter calls for mention in this record of our early work. We decided to be scrupulously careful in our choice of bishops and in the circumstances of their consecration. During four years and four months Abp.Mathew had laid hands on no fewer than eight bishops, and his bishops left him and submitted to other Churches (where some of them worked as priests) as readily as did his priests. The title of Archbishop is with us set aside. It was originally decided to drop the title of *Father* as attached to priests. There are no longer *Canons* in our small ranks. And no jurisdiction is claimed in regard to territory. We have done our best to be sensible and to cast off the earlier tradition of extravagance. I was myself responsible for the writing of the *Statement of Principles*.

The work on the Liturgy was interrupted by a good deal of travelling about needed for the founding

of our movement in different countries. This is not the place to speak of those journeys. But the following facts may be of interest. On my journey to Sydney as a newly-consecrated bishop I stopped at Adelaide in South Australia and ordained to the priesthood on July 6, 1916, David Morton Tweedie, now bishop in Australia. He was the first of our men to be ordained priest in Australia. (9)

In 1917 I went to New Zealand in connection with church and Masonic work. During that visit John Ross Thomson and William Crawford were ordained priests at Auckland on February 18 and 23 respectively. Both are now bishops. (10) I returned to Sydney and on June 24, assisted by Bishop Leadbeater, consecrated to the episcopate The Jonkheer Julian Adrian Mazel. (11)

Later on in the same year I returned to England via U.S.A., staying for some time at Hollywood (12) and visiting other towns in the States and in British Columbia on the journey. The first priest to be ordained in U.S.A. was my dear and honoured friend, Charles Hampton. He was ordained at Los Angeles on August 19, 1917. Dr. Edwin Burt Beckwith of Chicago was ordained in New York on September 16,1917. Some years later, on July 18, 1926, by courtesy of Bishop Cooper I had the honour of consecrating him bishop in the Church of St.Michael, Huizen, Holland, assisted by Bishops Cooper and Pigott. (13) Also in New York I ordained as priest Ray Marshall Wardall on October 4. He also is now a bishop. (14)

On January 18, 1918 in London I gave conditional re-ordination to the priesthood to Frank Waters Pigott, now our Presiding Bishop.(15) I returned to Australia a few months later, travelling again via U.S.A. On the way through I stopped at Chicago and ordained Edmund Walter Sheehan, now a bishop, as priest. (16)

The following year, 1919, our *Liturgy* as we now know it was at length published. My copy of this first edition bears on the title page the following note: "This copy was used at the consecration of the Rt.Rev.Irving S.Cooper at St.Alban's Sydney, on July 13,1919". I had the privilege of acting as consecrator on that occasion, and was assisted at the ceremony by Bishops Leadbeater and Mazel. Bishop Cooper was the first bishop for whom the form of consecration printed in our *Liturgy* was used. Mazel, like Bishop Leadbeater, was raised to the episcopate according to the Roman rite. (17)

I mention these American cases, first because I am writing for an American magazine, but also because I keep in my heart a living gratitude for the unfailing kindness and warmth of welcome which was everywhere shown to me in your country. Bishop Cooper's presence at Sydney while the work on the *Liturgy* was being finished was useful and timely. He put before us the needs and the outlook of a country which is not much tied to tradition. (18)

The later development of the Church comes more within the range of knowledge of our members and clergy in the large number of countries in which it is now at work. How much it has meant in the lives of numbers of people there are many to testify. It may be small so far as membership is reckoned in terms of numbers, but it makes its own distinctive contribution within the fellowship of Christian churches and serves its own good and intrinsic purpose as an instrument in the service of our common Lord and Master.

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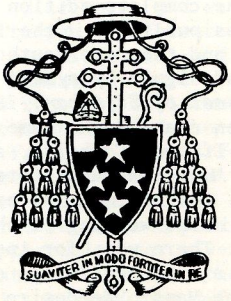
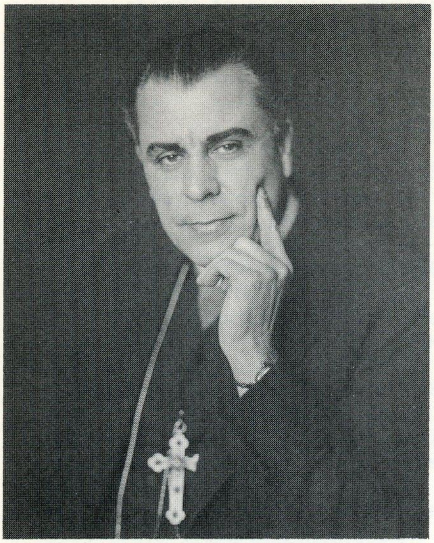


RT. REV. J. I. WEDGWOOD



THE RT.REV. JAMES INGALL WEDGWOOD
First Presiding Bishop, 1916-1923

Editorial Notes:

(1) Bishop King died in 1954.

(2) Father R.W.Bell died in 1964.

(3) Bernard Mary Williams, later the erratic "Archbishop of Caer-Glow", who died in 1952.

(4) Bishop Herford died in 1938.

(5) George S.Arundale, later Bishop and International President of the Theosophical Society, was one of the signatory witnesses.

(6) C. W. Leadbeater was then a priest in Anglican Orders but had been inactive since 1884 when he went to India to work with the Theosophical Society. He served as Presiding Bishop of the Church from 1923 until his death in 1934.

(7) Bishop Leadbeater was one of the greatest occultists and trained clairvoyant seers of all time. Much of the investigating connected with the development of the Liberal Catholic Liturgy and Rite was done by the aid of his super-normal faculties. See *The Science of the Sacraments*.

(8) A third revised edition of the *Liturgy* appeared in 1942 and a fourth is now in preparation for publication in 1967 or 1968.

(9) Bishop Tweedie died in 1941.

(10) Bishop Thomson died in 1938 and Bishop Crawford in 1962.

(11) Bishop Mazel died in 1928.

(12) At that time Hollywood contained a large Theosophical colony, since removed to Ojai. The former St.Alban's Pro-Cathedral in Los Angeles was adjacent to this colony.

(13) Bishop Hampton died in 1958, Bishop Beckwith in 1929.

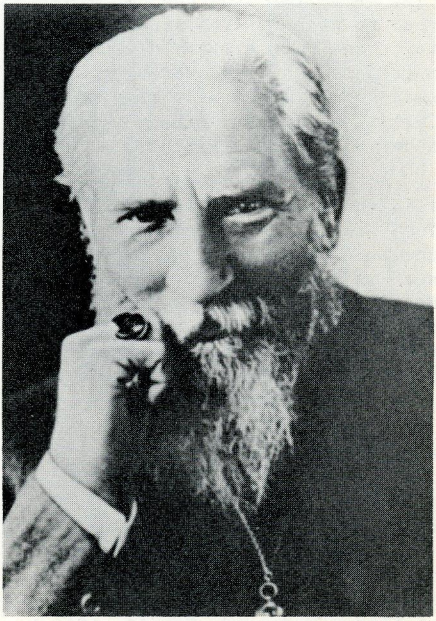
(14) Bishop Wardall died in 1954.

(15) Bishop Pigott was formerly an Anglican priest. He died in 1956.

(16) Bishop Sheehan is no longer connected with this Church.

(17) Bishop Cooper was the first Regionary Bishop for the U.S.A. A photograph of his consecration appears in *The Science of the Sacraments*, p.436, and in *The Ceremonies of the Liberal Catholic Rite*, Plate VII. He died in 1935.

(18) It was at this time, in 1919, that Bishop Cooper commenced work on his book, *Ceremonies of the Liberal Catholic Rite*, first published in 1934, a new edition of which was printed in 1965.



THE RT.REV. CHARLES W. LEADBEATER
Second Presiding Bishop, 1923-1934

Spread of the L.C.C.

Since its formation in London fifty years ago the Liberal Catholic Church has spread nearly all over the globe. As of its fiftieth anniversary there are churches or church centers (groups of members without local clergy) in the following countries: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, East Europe (several countries which we shall not name), England, Finland, France, Germany (including Berlin), Ghana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Irish Republic, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Scotland, Spain, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Sweden, Switzerland, United States, Venezuela, Wales, Yugoslavia. Five of these have no resident clergy.

The Church is nowhere large as yet in point of membership, partly due to the advanced nature of its doctrines, but largely due to the fact that it has consistently maintained the policy of not seeking to make "converts" from other churches or other religions, since it holds that every religion can be a valid road to God for its sincere votaries, and that all are divinely inspired and watched over by the same Lord who is known as Christ to the Christian but by other names in other of His many Faiths.

At the commencement of the year 1966 the complete list of Bishops of The Liberal Catholic Church, with the ecclesiastical areas they serve, set in chronological order of the dates of their consecration, is as follows. (Bishops *Emeritus* have retired from administrative activity, but remain members of the governing *General Episcopal Synod.*)

Adriaan G.Vreede, 1928, Presiding Bishop Emeritus.

Buenaventura Jiménez, 1936, Suffragan Bishop, Diocese of Puerto Rico & Auxiliary in the U.S.A.

José B.Acuña, 1937, retired from all activity. (Bishop Acuña assisted as an Acolyte at the consecration of Bishop Wedgwood, Feb.13, 1916.)

Harry H. Banks, 1946, Regionary Bishop, Province of New Zealand.

Otto E. Viking, 1946, Regionary Bishop, Scandinavian Province.

Ernest W.Jackson, 1946, Regionary Bishop, Province of Canada.

Charles D.T.Shores, 1946, Auxiliary Bishop in India.

Robert L.H.A.Henry, 1946, Regionary Bishop Emeritus, France & North Africa.

Newton A. Dahl, 1947, Regionary Bishop, Province of the U.S.A.

Walter J.Zollinger, 1947, Auxiliary Bishop for the U.S.A.

Milan Reiching, 1948, Regionary Bishop, Province of Eastern Europe.

Ignacio A.R.Muñio, 1948, Regionary Bishop, Province of Cuba and Mexico.

David B. Ewart, 1951, Suffragan Bishop Emeritus, West Australia.

Augustus W.Goetmakers, 1952, Regionary Bishop, Province of the Netherlands and Belgium.

Olimpio A.Cabellon, 1952, Suffragan Bishop, Diocese of Philippines.

Sir Hugh Sykes, Bt., 1953, Presiding Bishop and Regionary for the Province of Great Britain & Ireland and for all Unassigned Territory.

Walter Ballesteros, 1955, Regionary Bishop for the Province of South America.

John B.S. Coats, 1956, Suffragan Bishop for the Diocese of Italy.

Johan H. Warouw, 1957, Regionary Bishop for the Province of Indonesia.

William H.Pitkin, 1957, Auxiliary Bishop for the U.S.A.

Sigfrid Fjellander, 1957, Auxiliary Bishop for Sweden.

Harald Olander, 1957, Auxiliary Bishop for Finland.

Sten H.P.von Krusenstierna, 1958, Regionary Bishop for the Province of Australia.

Gustav Ringer, 1960, Regionary Bishop for the Province of East Central Europe.

Ramón Mayola, 1960, Auxiliary Bishop for Cuba.

Enrique O.Gossweiler, 1961, Suffragan Bishop, Dioceses of Argentina and Brazil.

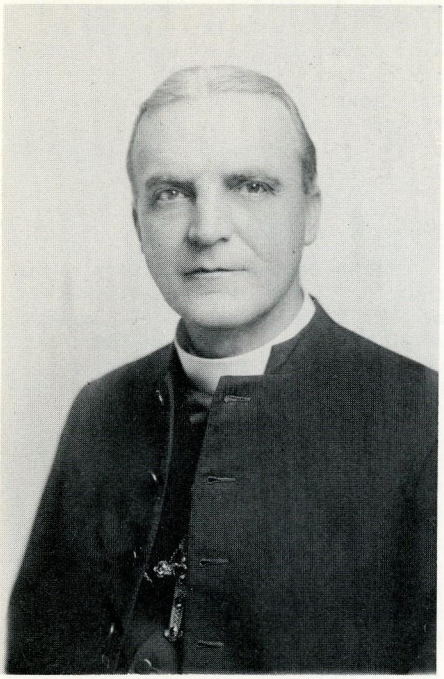
H.Marijn Brandt, 1961, Auxiliary Bishop for Netherlands-Belgium.

A Bishop in Eastern Europe.

Thomas P.Watson, 1963, Regionary Bishop for the Province of South Africa.

William G. Hill, 1964, Suffragan Bishop for the Diocese of Western Australia.

André Lhote, 1965, Regionary Bishop for the Province of France and North Africa.



THE RT.REV. FRANK WATERS PIGOTT
Third Presiding Bishop, 1934-1956

Organizational History

The Official Archives of THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH have been kept in London, England, since its foundation in that City in 1916, and the *General Episcopal Synod* in 1958 declared the London Office of the British Province to be the Official Headquarters of the Church, wheresoever the current Presiding Bishop may choose to reside.

The Church is governed by the *General Episcopal Synod*, composed at present of all bishops on the active list of the Church, with one of their number, elected to serve during their pleasure, acting as the *Presiding Bishop*.

The Presiding Bishops, in succession since the establishment of the Church, have been the following:

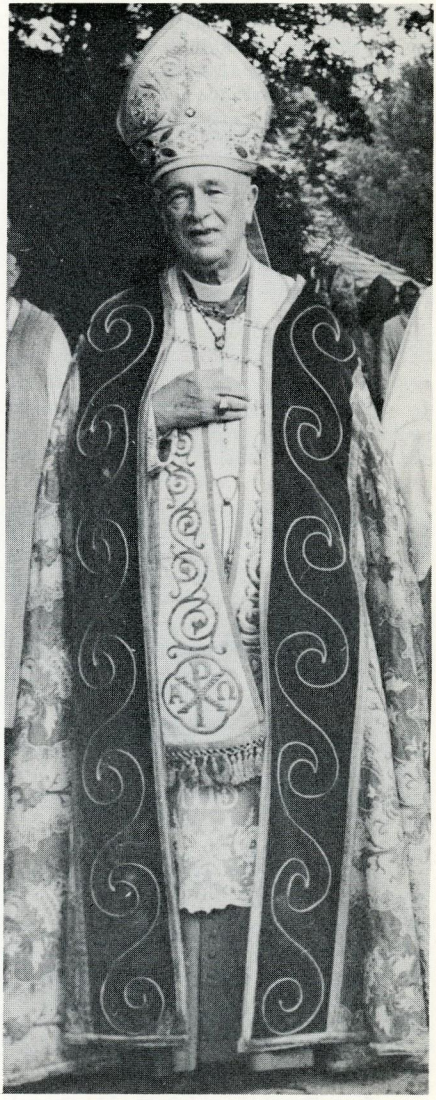
The Right Reverend James Ingall Wedgwood, 1916 to 1923.

The Right Reverend Charles Webster Leadbeater, 1923 to 1934.

The Right Reverend Frank Waters Pigott, 1934 to 1956.

The Right Reverend Adriaan Gerard Vreede, 1956 to 1964.

The Right Reverend Sir Hugh Sykes, Baronet, 1964 and at present. (1966)



THE RT.REV. ADRIAAN GERARD VREEDE
Fourth Presiding Bishop, 1956-1964

Province of the U.S.A.

The Liberal Catholic Church, Province of the United States of America, is incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland and maintains its legal headquarters in the City of Baltimore.

It is governed in spiritual matters by its Regionary Bishop as agent of the General Episcopal Synod, and in secular matters by an elected Corporate Board of Trustees.

Regionary Bishops, in succession since the establishment of the Province by the General Episcopal Synod, have been as follows:

The Rt.Rev.Irving S.Cooper, 1919 to 1935.

The Rt.Rev.Charles Hampton, 1935 to 1943.

The Rt.Rev.John T.Eklund, 1943 to 1948.

The Rt.Rev. Newton A. Dahl, 1948 and at present. (1966)

Schismatic Bishops and Churches

Since certain persons not named in the foregoing tables call themselves Bishops of the Liberal Catholic Church, Regionary Bishops of that Church in the United States, and even Presiding Bishops of the Liberal Catholic Church, it is necessary to state that as of January 1,1966, no bishop not named in the foregoing complete list of bishops has any connection with the world-wide Liberal Catholic Church governed by the so listed Bishops acting as its General Episcopal Synod and by their predecessors in this Synod from the beginning, nor with The Liberal Catholic Church, Province of the United States of America; nor are the churches and clergy associated with them a part of this Church.

Archbishop Arnold Harris Mathew of the Old Catholic Church, through whom our movement derived its episcopal succession, should not be confused with a certain Bishop Edward Murray Matthews of California who, whatever he may style himself, has no connection with this Church.

When The Liberal Catholic Church became distinct from the Old Catholic movement, it had the integrity and courtesy to adopt a new and distinctive name for itself in order to avoid confusion in the mind of the public and embarrassment to the Old Catholics who understandably did not care to be associated with certain aspects of its philosophy. It is unfortunate that the later pseudo *Liberal Catholics* have not followed the example set by this Church in this regard, thereby giving rise to misunderstandings on the part of the public and of some members in a few localities.

Theosophy and the Church

Bishop Wedgwood's history shows that the Church was established by members of the Theosophical Society, as a Catholic, Christian Church in which they, as Theosophists, would be welcome to receive the Catholic Sacraments and to participate in Christian worship - privileges they had found too often denied them in the older Churches, particularly those of the Catholic tradition.

It was *not* established as a part of the Theosophical Society, nor was there ever any intention that membership, whether of laity or clergy, should be restricted to Theosophists.

This was to be a *theosophical* church in the true meaning of that word - *Divine Wisdom*. And since Divine Wisdom is unlimited it can never be the exclusive possession of any individual or of any organization. It is ever to be sought for, but ever receding. "Veil after veil will lift, but there must be veil upon veil behind."

This Church was to be a church of and for "seekers for the Light" of Divine Wisdom; therefore it must be a church of religious and philosophic freedom so to seek, whether the *seeker* belong to any school of philosophy or to none, to any Christian denomination or none, to any religion or none.

The only qualification for admission to membership is a spirit of reverence for the Sacraments and a willingness to worship together using the common form or *Liturgy* approved by the Bishop Founders and their successors.

It is true that *The Statement*

THE RT.REV. SIR HUGH SYKES, BT.
Fifth Presiding Bishop, 1964-

of Principles and Summary of Doctrine contain much which is generally called "theosophy"; this is inevitable because both the Church and the T.S. are composed of seekers after truth, and insofar as real truths are found, they will be equally the truths of both groups, or of any other truth-seeking school. The Liberal Catholic Church would certainly subscribe to the motto of the Theosophical Society: "There is no Religion Higher than Truth". So long as no one seeks to impose *his* ideas of truth upon *another*, there is no ground for conflict and no need for confusion between the two distinct bodies, which still have a large overlap in membership.

Doctrine and the Clergy

While all members of the L.C.C. are free in matters of belief, of interpretation of Scriptures, Creeds and Liturgy, the Bishops have declared it their policy to accept for Holy Orders only men who have come to be in *general agreement* with the Church's *Summary of Doctrine*, with those truths which have from the beginning been generally accepted and taught among us as the fundamental basis of our church life, without which it has no distinctive reason to exist. To act otherwise would invite chaos; instead of a community of "seekers for the Light" we would degenerate into just another sect where "the blind lead the blind". Those also who would abuse our freedom to try to steer us back towards the older orthodoxies (and there have been such), while welcome as *communicants*, cannot expect to be accorded positions of leadership.

+ William H. Pitkin

THE RT.REV. IRVING S. COOPER
First Regionary Bishop
Province of the U.S.A., 1919-1935

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The following books are recommended
for further information on
THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC CHURCH:

The Liturgy (1942) ..... $ 1.75
Statement of Principles and Summary of Doctrine ..... $ .50
(Above available from The St.Alban Press, Box 598, Ojai, California, 93023)

The Science of the Sacraments, by Bishop Leadbeater ..... $ 5.00
(Available from The Theosophical Press, Box 270, Wheaton, Illinois, 60187)

The Liberal Catholic Church is
neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant
but is an Independent Church
The Orders of its Clergy
were derived from
The Old Catholic Church of Holland
which became separate from Rome
over two centuries ago
It is a Ceremonial Church which combines
the Ancient Form of Sacramental Worship
with the utmost Liberality of Thought
It leaves its members Free
in Matters of Belief

The Seven Historic Sacraments
are administered